

OPINION

by Prof. Krasimir Draganov Taskov

Composer and pianist, NAM "Prof P. Vladigerov" – Sofia

UNIVERSAL AND NATIONAL IN THE PIANO MUSIC OF CHINA IN THE 20TH CENTURY

Author: **Guo Rui**

Scientific supervisor: Assoc. Prof Velislava Karagenova

The submitted biography of Guo Rui indicates both her educational, until 2016, and intensive work, as a pianist, chamber performer, teacher in China, and from 2021-2024, as a full-time doctoral student studying at the Department of Piano and Accordion -AMDFFA, Plovdiv with the scientific supervisors: Assoc. Prof Velislava Karagenova.

Her successful appearances at several forums and competitions in Bulgaria and abroad with prizes from competitions are impressive - 2021 in Prague, second prize. 2022 in Zagreb - second prize. Gold medal for ensemble - piano and violin at Orpheus Talents Festival.

Guo Rui's concert activity is an important prerequisite and a successful proof of her professional qualities and interest in entering essentially into the scientific field.

Already with the title of her thesis, attention is directed to the peculiarities of the Chinese professional compositional-performing and pedagogical practice – distinguished by a certain characteristic, specificity and national affiliation.

Guo Rui presents a broad panorama of the processes and stages of the gradual, and in recent years particularly intensive, development and progress of the piano art, associated with the flourishing and excellence of the Chinese pianists and musicians of a global scale, of an effectively functioning and successful pedagogical system in China.

She makes a detailed overview and analysis in historical terms, methodically presenting the period of origin, the several phases, stages of development of piano music and performance in the 20th century.

The topic *Universal and National in the Piano Music of China in the 20th Century*, chosen by Guo Rui has the character of a scientific historiographical study of the stages that formed the rise of this art, as well as the metamorphic vicissitudes related to the sociopolitical situation in China until today. In her extensive research, she presents the trends in the development of the piano art in China in the 20th century.

The work consists of 182 pages and is structured into Introduction, Four Chapters, Conclusion, Contributions, References. More than 70 sources are used in the bibliography. Over 60 musical examples of analyzed works by Chinese composers are included.

Guo Rui's doctoral dissertation is the fruit of her historical knowledge in detail, presenting in a comprehensive study the trends in the development of the piano art in China.

The author's interest is supported by a number of data array studies, some of which are online sources, as well as with a maximum resource from other printed archival or new specialized publications.

In the Introduction, Guo Rui lays out the basic parameters of her research, involving an extensive presentation of samples of iconic piano works by Chinese composers across a wide historical range, from the 1930s to the present.

Guo Rui chronologically traces the conditions and the attempts from the 18th to the 20th centuries, regarding the integration of musical art imported from the European culture, initially as market imports of pianos and grand pianos, with piano literature, which gave an initial impetus to the development of piano performance in the early period (1840–1919). Another essential starting point in the work is the emergence and the development of professional accompaniment for piano by Chinese composers, in parallel with performance practice, which is the subject of presentation and analysis in several consecutive chapters of the study. The detailed, clear and precise judgment in presenting numerous creative biographies of pianists and composers from different stages of the historical development of piano art in China is impressive. I believe that such an approach is justified for a more complete and broad reflection of the work of significant personalities, with an important role in the development of this art – in pedagogy, performance and creativity. Guo Rui skilfully handles the musical material presented, as a professional interpreter and with facts found in various sources. She builds an accurate picture, through her personal assessment of the phenomena and the role of iconic representatives in the piano art and performance of China.

The highlighted four contributions of the scientific work clearly present the significance of the topic chosen by the candidate, through a comprehensive methodical sequence of the text presentation, as an emphasis in this connection is her concept in the search for a dialogue between national identity and universal musical heritage, of current trends and changes in the development of art.

In my opinion the dissertation work of the doctoral candidate from China, Guo Rui, is a serious and thorough study and should be evaluated on the scientific merits that it undoubtedly possesses. I recommend to the respected scientific jury the awarding of the educational and scientific degree "doctor" in professional field 8.3. Music and Dance Art to Guo Rui.

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